

CFHHS Interim Committee Testimony
9/11/17

My name is Dave Eaton. I am the Executive Director of Counterpoint, Inc. in Livingston and am the President of the Montana Association of Community Disability Services, Systems Advocacy. I have worked for 32 years in the field of developmental disabilities supporting people in our society who need it the most. I've seen many ups and downs but I am incredulous and appalled that DPHHS has proposed a budget cut of 3.47% to all provider rates beginning October 1st. Not long after receiving this information I read in the local paper that elected officials such as the governor and the secretary of state will receive pay raises by as much as 11%. To everyone who works in this field and to all the people with disabilities who we work for this feels like a kick in the groin.

If the 3.47% rate cut goes into effect October 1st Counterpoint will see a budget cut of about \$30,000 for fiscal year 18. The rate cut could effect us in the following ways:

1. A reduction in staff pay and/or compensation which makes up 83% of our budget.
2. A delay or cancellation of our plans to renovate one of our group homes.
3. A withdrawal from our financial reserves to cover the budget shortfall.
4. Another year that we cannot give our staff, already poorly paid, a wage increase.
5. Make it even tougher to find and retain staff to work in our field.

DPHHS should look to balance its budget by making cuts elsewhere. The worst thing that can be done is to cut rates where the rubber meets the road: where thousands of people across Montana are working face to face, day in and day out to support our fellow citizens with disabilities.

I urge DPHHS not to balance its budget on the backs of people with disabilities and the people who work for them. I urge this Committee to continue its objection to this rule. Your attention to this issue is sincerely appreciated. Thanks for your time. |



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